6964138/2023/SEC-IV-EFS01

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

Public Services – Andhra Pradesh Forest Department - Departmental proceedings initiated against Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor, under Rule 20 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Classification Control & Appeal) Rules, 1991 - Penalty of "withholding of five percent (5%) of pension for a period of two (2) years" – Imposed – Orders – Issued.

ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SEC.IV) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Ms.No.8 **Dated.03.02.2023.**
Read the following.

1) From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh, Guntur, Lr.Ref.No.9562/2018/A&DC-1, dated 04.11.2021.
2) Memo.No.2207/Sec.IV/A1/2021, EFS&T (Sec.IV) Department dated 27.04.2022.
3) Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor, representation dated 16.06.2022.
4) Letter.No.2207/Sec.IV/A1/2021, EFS&T (Sec.IV) Dept., dated 02.09.2022.
5) From the Secretary, APPSC, Vijayawada, File No.GAD03-APPSODCC/80/2022-DC SEC – APPSC Computer No.1843901, dated 28.09.2022.

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ORDER:

In the letter 1st read above, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh, Guntur has informed that the following Articles of Charges were issued to Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur, in Ref.No.9562/2018/Vig-1, dated 01.02.2019 under Rule 20 of Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (Classification Control & Appeal) Rules, 1991:-

Article-1:	"*That* Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer while he was working in Punganur Range shown willful negligence in verifying and test checking the works on ground and putting the signatures in M. Book no.88/2015-16 in token of test checking without actually verifying the works in the field".
Article-2:	"*That* Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer while working as Punganur Range he failed to take up Departmental Extraction of Bamboos existing in Punganur Range during 2017-18 as per the working plan prescriptions in spite of repeated instructions and providing of entire logistic support, which resulted loss of revenue to the Government during 2017-18".
Article-3:	"*That* Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer while working in Punganur Range failed to start the nursery work well in advance and not completed in time by motivating the staff members concerned which resulted in getting of small and unhealthy seedling besides waste of expenditure".
Article-4:	"*That* Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer while working in Punganur Range has failed to start the nursery work in time and mislead the Divisional Forest Officer, Chittoor West by providing fake information on raising of nurseries without actually raising of seedlings".
Article-5:	*That* Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer while he was working in Punganur Range has withdrawn an amount of Rs.1,12,600/- towards the wages for engaging of 18 no. of fire watchers and booked the expenditure without actually engaging fire watchers and submitted accounts providing fake vouchers for entire amount of Rs.1,20,600/-".

[P.T.O]

2. The Charged Officer acknowledged the receipt of Articles of Charges on 28.02.2019 and submitted his written defence statement on 25.04.2019. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur appointed the Chief Conservator of Forests, Wild Life Management Circle, Tirupati as Inquiry Officer and the Divisional Forest Officer, Flying Squad Division, Piler as Presenting Officer in Proc.No.9562/2018/Vig-1(i) & (ii), dated 20.05.2019, for conducting the regular enquiry.

3. The Inquiry Officer & Chief Conservator of Forests/Conservator of Forests., Wild Life Management Circle, Tirupati has completed the enquiry and submitted his findings along with connected case record in Rc.No.134/2019/M4, dated 17.06.2020, wherein the Inquiry Officer has concluded as follows:-

Findings:

Article-1:	"The available evidence proves that the Charged Officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur has test checked the Plantation works in Muthukur Beat before recording date of the Forest Beat Officer, Muthukur and check measurement date of Forest Section Officer, Punganur. The Charged Officer has stated that he had physically inspected the field and for the adjustment of dates he has committed the error and made mistake in M. Book and requested to excuse him. Though the FRO has visited the field and inspected the work, as far as the article of charge that the date of check measurement by FRO is before the recording date of FBO, Muthukur is concerned, **it is proved".**
Article-2:	"The available evidences prove that the charged officer did not take up the departmental Extraction of Bamboo in Punganur range during 2017-18. Though the charged officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur was permitted to take extraction of Bamboo departmentally in view of non-participation of bidders; the Charged Officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur has not taken any initiative instead submitted report stating that the range staff did not have sufficient knowledge in Bamboo extraction. He has not taken any initiative resolve the difficulties if any well in advance and failed to carry out the departmental extraction of Bamboo as instructed by the superior officers. Hence, **the charge is proved ".**
Article-3:	"It is evident that the nursery targets for Battamdoddi nursery and Singirigutta nursery were not completed in time. FSO Charala and FSO Punganur stated that due to job cards problem raising of nursery was delayed under NREGS scheme and later they have completed the nursery targets and plants were distributed. Based on the statements and records available, the nursery targets were not completed in time and the charged officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur did not follow it up with the subordinate and also did not take any action against the concerned staff for delay in raising the nursery. Hence **the charge is proved".**
Article-4:	"It is evident that the nursery targets for Singirigutta nursery in Punganur Range were not achieved in time. FSO Charala stated that due to job cards problem the raising of Singirigutta nursery was delayed and later they have completed the nursery targets and plants were distributed. Based on the statements and records available the quality of nursery was not up to mark and the charged officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur did not follow it up with the subordinates and also did not take any action against the concerned staff for poor quality and delay in raising the nursery. Hence **the charge is proved".**

Article-5:	'From the enquiry and available records, it was observed that under CAMPA scheme no fire watchers were engaged in Peddaupparapalli Section, Avulapalle Section from Jan'2018 to Mar'2018 in 2017-18. But the earmarked funds of Rs.1,00,500/- were withdrawn without engaging the fire watchers in CAMPA scheme from Jan'2018 to Mar'2018. The concerned FSO's and FBO's have stated that they have utilized the funds and engaged five (5) numbers of five watchers from Apr'2018, May'2018 and June'2018 and paid them by cash and not thorough bank. It was also observed that the charged officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur submitted false vouchers as it was noticed on the vouchers that fire watchers were engaged from Jan'2018 to mar'2018. Further, Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur stated that he has withdrawn the funds and the funds were given to FSO's and FBO's through Range Assistant (temporary/outsourced person) for engaging fire watchers from Jan'2018 to Mar'2018. Further in IFM Scheme FSO and FBO Peddaupparapalli stated that they have withdrawn an amount of Rs.21000/- from Polamakulapalli VSS and gave Rs.5000/- to Range Assistant (Temporary/outsourcing) as percentage and paid only Rs.13400/- to (1) number of fire watcher engaged between 25.02.2018 to 25.04.2018 and with the remaining Rs.2600/- they have engaged local people to extinguish the fire. All these evidences and statements indicate the poor monitoring and supervision of the Charged officer Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, Punganur in timely engagement and payment of fire watchers during the fire season and lack of financial discipline. Hence **the charge is proved.**

4. The findings of Inquiry Officer were communicated to the Charged Officer vide Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh, Guntur Lr. Ref.No.9562/2018/A&DC-1, dated 26.06.2020, for submission of further defence statement. The Charged Officer has acknowledged the receipt of the same notice and submitted his further defence statement dated Nil, wherein he did not submit any new/fresh points.

5. The Charged Officer has retired from Government Service on attaining the age of superannuation on 30.06.2020. Hence, the disciplinary proceedings are continued under Rule 9 of Andhra Pradesh Revised Pension Rules, 1980.

6. After careful examination of the matter, with reference to the findings of the Inquiry Officer, and material made available on record, Government have taken a provisional decision to impose a punishment of "withholding of five percent (5%) of pension for a period of two (2) years", against Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor, under Rule 9 of Andhra Pradesh Revised Pension Rules, 1980. Accordingly, a show-cause notice was issued to the retired Charged Officer in Memo 2nd read above. In the reference 3rd read above, the retired charged officer has submitted his explanation to the show-cause notice.

7. After careful examination of the matter and it is observed that further defence statement submitted by the charged officer on the findings of the Inquiry Officer and the explanation submitted by the charged officer to show cause notice, are one and the same. There are no new / fresh / valid grounds to consider his explanation. Therefore, Government have decided to confirm the provisional decision to impose a punishment of "withholding of five percent (5%) of pension for a period of two (2) years", against Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor, under Rule 9 of Andhra Pradesh Revised Pension Rules, 1980.

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8. In the reference 4th read above, the Secretary, A.P. Public Service Commission, Vijayawada has been requested to obtain and communicate the concurrence of the Commission on the proposed penalty against Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer, earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor. In the letter 5th read above, the Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission, has communicated the Commission advice.

9. After careful examination of the entire matter, it has been decided to deviate from the advice of A.P. Public Service Commission, Vijayawada, the Government hereby order to impose a penalty of "withholding of five percent (5%) of pension for a period of two (2) years", against Sri P. Govindarajan, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor West Division, Chittoor, under Rule 9 of Andhra Pradesh Revised Pension Rules, 1980.

10. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur shall take necessary action accordingly.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

NEERABH KUMAR PRASAD
SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
Sri P. Govindarajan, FRO (Retired), earlier Forest Range Officer, Punganur Range of Chittoor through the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur.
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur. (w.e.)
(Connected record File Rc.No.134/2019/M4 pages 1 to 278 and Rc.No.1818/2017/A pages 1 to 224).

Copy to

The Accountant General (A&E), Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada.
The Director of Treasuries & Accounts, Mangalagiri, Guntur District.
The Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission, Vijayawada.
The P.S. to Secretary to Chief Minister, A.P. Secretariat, Velagapudi.
The OSD to M (Energy, EFS&T, Mines & Geology).
The Secretary to A.P. Vigilance Commission, A.P. Secretariat, Velagapudi.
The PS to the Special Chief Secretary to Government, EFS&T Department.
SF/SC (Computer No.1562544)

//FORWARDED :: BY ORDER//

SECTION OFFICER